

## Personal Dilemmas

Read the situations described below, and answer the questions that follow. Be prepared to share and explain your rationale for responses.

Jonathan is a junior in high school and has many decisions to make in his life. He wants to go to college very much but is unable to pay for it. He has missed the deadline for qualifying for financial aid. He feels he will excel at any college he attends, but he needs an academic scholarship. Although his grade point average is good, it is not high enough to earn him the desired scholarship. Knowing this, he thinks about boosting his scores by cheating on his mid-term exams.

Jonathan has other decisions to make. His girlfriend is very possessive, and he would like to date others without upsetting her. Mindy, his girlfriend, attends a different high school. There is a big dance coming up at his school, and he is thinking of asking a girl from his psychology class. He is afraid that Mindy will find out and get angry.

Jonathan has other problems to face. While Jonathan was on a school field trip, Tim, his best friend, asked if he could use his locker. Jonathan didn't quite see the necessity of this but told Tim it was okay. A few days later, the school searched the student lockers looking for illegal drugs. Jonathan's locker was identified as one of those possessing drugs. He was called to the principal's office and asked to explain. He was told that the police had been called.

1. Should Jonathan cheat? Why or why not?
2. Should Jonathan ask his classmate to go to the dance with him? Why or why not?
3. Should Jonathan implicate his best friend? Why or why not?
4. Review your answers for each situation presented. Is your rationale for the solution to Jonathan's problems the same in each case? If there are differences in your reasoning, explain why you used a different rationale for each situation.

*A summary of Kohlberg's findings in terms of age appropriate morality in relation to Heinz's dilemma.*

### Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development

#### PRECONVENTIONAL

- Stage 1: Punishment orientation.** Obedience to authority is considered.  
Example: "He shouldn't steal the drug because he might get caught and be punished" (avoiding punishment)
- Stage 2: Pleasure-seeking orientation.** Action is determined by one's own needs. Example: "It won't do him any good to steal the drug because his wife will be dead by the time he gets out of jail" (self-interest)

#### CONVENTIONAL

- Stage 3: Good boy/good girl orientation.** Action determined by the approval of their peer group. Example: "He shouldn't steal the drug because others will think he is a thief. His wife will not want to be saved by stealing" (avoiding disapproval)
- Stage 4: Authority orientation.** Should uphold the law at all costs. Follow social rules. Example: "Although his wife needs the drug, he should not break the law to get it. His wife's condition doesn't justify stealing" (traditional morality of authority)

#### POSTCONVENTIONAL

- Stage 5: Social-contract orientation.** Rules are open to question but are upheld for the good of the community. Example: "He should not steal the drug. The druggist response is unfair but mutual respect for the rights of others must be maintained." (social contract)
- Stage 6: Morality of individual principles.** High value is placed on justice, dignity, and equality. Example: "He should steal the drug but alert authorities he has done it. He will have to face a penalty, but he will save a human life." (self-chosen ethical principles)